

RICHARD HUGH BAKER

6TH DISTRICT, LOUISIANA

COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

RANKING MEMBER

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515-1806

October 18, 2007

COMMITTEE ON
FINANCIAL SERVICES

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GOVERNMENT SPONSORED ENTERPRISES

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COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Dear Friends:

I want you to hear the facts from me about the current Washington, DC debate over health care for our children. Based on recent press reports, many people are asking, *"What's going on up there?"*

First, in 1997, Congress created a program to help children from lower income families get health insurance. It is operated by the state, but is paid for with federal dollars. It is a great program. I helped create this program ten years ago when I voted for it. It's called the **State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP.**

This program provides real help to families that can't get health insurance for their kids. In our area, children in a family of four that earns up to about \$40,000 a year can get health insurance through SCHIP.

The debate in Washington, DC is focused on two main questions. First, should this program be expanded to cover families who earn more than \$80,000 a year; and second, how to find a way to pay for it.

The first suggestion was that money be taken from Medicare to pay for this expansion. That's right, some thought it was a good idea to take money from seniors who couldn't afford health care and send their money to families who earned more than **\$80,000** a year. When I pointed this out, that plan went away.

Now Congress is looking at a slightly different plan. This time the plan is funded, but only for a five year period. What happens then? Well, even the basic program, which we all know is a great program, will shut down. **In 2012, there won't be enough funding to cover even the poorest of children.**

Today, there are nearly 70,000 Louisiana children eligible for health insurance but the state hasn't signed them up. Shouldn't we make sure those who are most in need get the service before we expand the program? I believe this is especially true when the proposed expansion will cost an additional \$35 billion we don't have.

I have supported and will continue to support health care assistance for those with clear financial need. That's the right thing to do.

I will also continue in my effort to establish a complete health care system that fairly meets the needs of our communities. This is not an easy task, but Sixth District voters elected me to make the difficult decisions, and that's exactly what I'll do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard H. Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being more prominent and the last name "Baker" following in a similar style.

Richard H. Baker
Member of Congress